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SYMINGTON: LATTER-DAY McCARTHY?

Sen. Stuart Symington, Harry Truman's man for President, seems determined to out-McCarthy the late Sen. Joe McCarthy himself.

His attacks against the Eisenhower Administration's defense program have become more and more unrestrained as the Democratic National Convention draws closer. At a time when almost every Democrat, and some Republicans, are equally disturbed about the lid placed on defense spending, no one can match the Senator from Missouri for headline-gathering on the subject.

He accuses the President of deliberately falsifying intelligence reports so as to downgrade the Russian ICBM potential. This goes considerably beyond a charge that the administration is mistaken, or unduly preoccupied with a balanced budget, or even that it might be "soft" on Wall Street, for that matter.

What Senator Symington is saying is that President Eisenhower knows better, is deliberately creating a false picture in order to beguile the American people and the Congress. What possible motive the President might have for such treasonous action the Senator has not revealed.

To bolster his charges, Senator Symington just recently threatened to make public a secret report by the Central Intelligence Agency which, he says, shows the Russian threat has "increased considerably" over last year.

This brings to mind one of the genuinely funny incidents of the entire, sad McCarthy-scare era. It involved Joseph L. Rauh Jr., chairman of Americans for Democratic Action, Clayton Fritchey, editor of the Democratic Party's official magazine, Democratic Digest, three top officials of the Washington Post and assorted other leading-light "liberals."

This group was gulled by one Paul H. Hughes who convinced them that he was a member of Senator McCarthy's staff and had inside information "proving" the distasteful extremes to which the late Senator went. There is something to be said for their methods, after all.

of egheads a weird assortment of bloodcurdling tales of intrigue, blackmail and assorted rascality, all of which he made up from his own limitless imagination but all of which Rauh and company swallowed hook, line and sinker.

A high point of the Hughes fantasy was an episode in which Senator McCarthy's aides were supposed to receive from a government employee a secret document. This was what the "liberal" coterie had been waiting for; an illegal act by Senator McCarthy. They quickly went to Attorney General Herbert Brownell and, although Hughes had been smart enough not to give too many details of this non-existent conspiracy, told him what little they knew.

Of course there was no exchange of stolen documents, and shortly thereafter Hughes was exposed for a phoney to the everlasting embarrassment of Rauh and his fellow fleeced-sheep.

Perhaps it is the painful memory of this episode that now silences the "liberal" group and makes them forbear denunciation of Senator Symington's "methods." On its face, is there a great deal of difference between Senator McCarthy's accepting a government document in his investigation of Communist infiltration of Washington officialdom and Senator Symington's public exposure of a CIA report of enemy capability? One can imagine how much the Russians would give to know what our officials believe them capable of doing in the missile field.

The sad part of all this is that Senator Symington might be right in his main contention, i.e., that our defenses are not strong enough, just as many people thought for a time that Senator McCarthy was right about the extent of Communist influence in government.

But if the Senator from Missouri continues his present course of unrestrained invective and irresponsible abuse of position, he runs the risk of the same kind of failure that finally ruined the late Senator from Wisconsin. There is something to be said for clean methods, after all.

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